

BAD GIRL

Starring

SAMARA WEAVING, SARA WEST, FELICITY PRICE and BEN WINSPEAR

Written & Directed by

FIN EDQUIST

Produced by

STEVE KEARNEY, BRUNO CHARLESWORTH and TENILLE KENNEDY

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Running Time	90 Mins
Rating	TBC
Shoot Gauge	ALEXA
Language	English
Screen Ratio	2:3:9
Sound	Dolby Digital
Year of Production	2015
Country of Production	Australia

PUBLICITY CONTACT

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DISTRIBUTION

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INTRODUCTION

BAD GIRL commenced Principal Photography in Perth, Western Australia, end August 2015 and is the debut feature film of director Fin Edquist.

The film was shot in the Swan Valley, Kalamunda and Serpentine areas over a period of 4 weeks from 31 August – 24 September.

BAD GIRL is produced by Steve Kearney, Bruno Charlesworth and Tenille Kennedy.

The original screenplay is by Fin Edquist.

BAD GIRL is financed by ScreenWest ,Melbourne International Film Fund,DayDream Productions and Fulcrum Finance. It is also part of the MIFF Premiere Fund and will have its Australian Premiere at MIFF 2016 in late July

Curious Distribution is the Australian/NZ Distributor.
Arclight Films is the International Sales Agent

BAD GIRL offers a unique insight into a dysfunctional modern family and their search for renewal and belonging. It asks the questions – What is family ? Who gets to decide? Does nature or nurture prevail ? It is both identifiably Australian and universal in its themes. In every dream home there is a heartache . A troubled teen searching for a 'real ' connection , but - be careful what you wish for.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Bad Girl Amy must fight to save her adoptive parents from their self-styled vengeful blood daughter, Chloe.

LONG SYNOPSIS

AMY ANDERSON (Sara West) is a bad girl. Abandoned at birth, she spent her first ten years in orphanages and foster care until being adopted by upwardly mobile MICHELLE (Felicity Price) and PETER (Ben Winspear). The relationship has always been fractious but reached breaking point when Amy trashed the old family house in a crystal-meth haze. Currently on probation for drug offences, Peter and Michelle whisk Amy off to their remote new house in a last-ditch attempt to keep her out of jail and save the family.

But Amy has no intention of being part of this family, planning to run away to the city with some old drug mates. But when they don't show, Amy goes into a self-destructive spiral and tries to throw herself off a bridge. Her suicide is interrupted by CHLOE (Samara Weaving), an ambitious and attractive local girl. Seeing a potential role model for their troubled daughter, Amy's parents employ Chloe as their cleaner and encourage the girls' friendship.

Guarded and cynical by nature, Amy is initially suspicious of Chloe's motivations. She also discovers, to her surprise, that she envies Chloe's ease and intimacy with her parents. But when Chloe encourages Amy to seek out her biological parents, a strong bond is formed, an initial attraction giving way to a tumultuous sexual relationship.

But behind Chloe's sweet smile, there is a scheming personality who is using Amy to worm her way into Peter and Michelle's affections, subtly turning them against Amy. Oblivious to Chloe's machinations, Amy connects with an online presence she believes to be her biological father and organizes to meet him and his wife in secret. Their failure to appear devastates Amy while Chloe's affection and attention to Amy becomes more and more unsettling. Amy's mounting unease at Chloe is brought to a head by the arrival at the Anderson house of a hard-bitten detective (DANIELS) who is seeking Chloe, alluding to a troubled and violent past.

Demanding answers, Amy confronts Chloe, whose sunny façade cracks. She reveals that she's the Andersons' estranged biological daughter, put up for adoption at birth. After a lifetime's searching, she's finally come home, and this time she's determined to stay. To her horror, Amy discovers her "biological parents" were actually Chloe's invention, a means to get her out of the house – she's been set up from the start. In the violent confrontation that follows, Chloe knocks out Amy and tries to engineer her "suicide" by gassing her in the parents' BMW in a remote bush location. She then returns to the Anderson house and trashes it, making it look like the last defiant act of a suicidal teen.

Peter and Michelle are devastated at finding their house destroyed and their daughter missing. Chloe tends to them in their hour of need, but her plan starts to come unstuck when she discovers that Amy has escaped the car. But where is she?

Frightened and alone, Amy treks back into town where she must decide whether to flee to the city or stay and risk going back to jail. Realizing that Peter and Michelle are the only support she has, she returns home to confront Chloe, who is equally determined to oust Amy and take what she sees as her rightful place in the family.

With the police and detective Daniels closing, and Chloe's behavior increasingly erratic, Amy realizes she must fight for her family. It's nature-versus-nurture as the girls engage in a life-or-death battle over the parents. In the end, only one bad girl will be left standing.

WRITER/DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Fin Edquist

Steve Kearney, one of the producers on the film, approached me over 10 years ago to write a revenge based thriller loosely based on the idea of surrogacy. We both had other projects that took up our time but, over the next few years, we started to collaborate and come up with an idea centering around an adoption. Naturally, we went through a number of phases. Originally the storyline was to do with surrogacy and centered around a surrogate who felt disenfranchised from her biological parents. Although this was a strong and topical storyline we felt it lack an internal and compelling resonance. In the end we were drawn to about the essence of family and identity and a character questioning these very things. As we followed this theme it became an adoption story.

We wrote a screenplay and decided to make a teaser to pitch to actors and distributors and take to Cannes to gauge European interest in what we thought was a strong and simple rites of passage story anchored in a familiar setting. We cast two actors to shoot our teaser and by a stroke of good fortune our current lead, Sara West, was one of them. I wrote a couple of scenes for them and as we were filming the teaser, we all realized, *this is the story*.

The conflict between the two girls over the family started to take shape as the main focus for the film. To begin with, it was Chloe's film but inevitably, like a gravitational force, we ended up orbiting around Amy and her story.

Compared to my other projects, this one was very external. I tend to write from within and then elaborate on aspects. But it was different with this project. Once we settled on Amy as the integral force, I understood in a very primal way what the story was and why this story was compelling and magnetic. All of a sudden there was a sense of excitement around the teaser we were creating.

Years later, it's quite poetic to have Sara West attached to the final production. We always knew she would be perfect for the role but we did worry that her building reputation and her career trajectory might preclude her.. It was a great relief to see her ongoing enthusiasm for the role undimmed when we finally came to shoot and we felt very lucky being able to work around her schedule and to cast her as Amy.

We auditioned a lot of girls for the role of Chloe and I was thrilled with the decision to cast Samara Weaving. There's something in her performance that makes you question everything you're seeing. She has a way of wrong-footing you; presenting in one way and delivering in another. It actually occurred to me about a week before we started filming that she had the most difficult role to play – based on the fact that half of it is a performance. She's pretending to be somebody she's not but you don't want the audience to know that it's a performance until the time is right. I think we hit the jackpot with Samara, and also with Sara; you can really see the friendship between the two actors (on and off screen). So, when the betrayal comes, it feels all the more real and important.

Ben and Felicity have also done a great job fleshing out the role of Amy's parents. We were looking for parents that would immediately grate with somebody like Amy, because you want them estranged at the start. But, we didn't want them to appear as two dimensional characters, we wanted actors that could present in one way and then surprise you. I met with many actors including both Ben and Felicity and they really understood the roles. Their understanding of the film and the themes instilled me with the confidence I needed from the start. They both bring a believability to these roles. Believability was something we worked really hard to achieve with BAD GIRL.

I'm normally a writer and prior to that, like many aspiring first time directors, I was directing short films, videos and commercials. With my first feature spending a few months in pre-production and shooting in Perth, was such a great experience. There were a lot of young and very talented people on the crew and what was supposed to be an 85 minute film was ultimately distilled down from our first cut of over two and a half hours. As always, we had limited time and budget, but we accomplished far in excess of what I thought we'd be able to in this time and it's due to the tireless commitment of the amazing cast and crew. We tried to avoid playing safe and empowered as many of the creative team as we could, searching for something new and strong they could bring.

BAD GIRL is meant to feel like it's told in a way that's not monochromatic. We've created this world and, like all worlds, there's a kind of comedy, there's suffering, and there's suspense. All of these elements make for a complete and satisfying story. And then there's a satirical edge, coupled with the fact that some parts make for incredibly uncomfortable watching. You'll be enthralled and hopefully, at points, you'll be scared. You'll be cheering for one girl and then the other and you'll come away thinking this is a really great example of what a psychological thriller can be.

PRODUCER'S STATEMENT

Steve Kearney, Bruno Charlesworth, Tenille Kennedy

Steve started developing this film quite some time ago in 2005 with Fin and eventually, through various drafts, teamed up with Bruno in 2010. Most recently, Tenille came on board in 2014 as we began the long and arduous task of getting it funded. Steve and Bruno developed the teaser in 2012 and took it to Cannes . The international response (especially in Europe) was so strong we knew that the universal themes and fresh and unique take on a primal emotional element such as 'family' would make a strong and kinetic film.

Like all projects such as this, driven by a desire to see the film made no matter the obstacles ,it evolved and changed over time but, at its heart, it's a nature versus nurture story about two damaged teenage girls who are fighting for the same family.

It was a tough shoot and there were a lot of first-timer's but, the thing they brought, is an unparalleled energy and passion and a real desire to make a great film. We tried to make sure that we took risks and followed through by empowering talented people to push their comfort limits and bring their creative aspirations to be on full display. We were lucky we had the support of such incredible and experienced collaborators such as Warren Ellis and Simon Njoo to balance the energy of those with raw talent but, perhaps, less experience.

Working within our modest budget brings its challenges but also a freedom to try different things and to keep the integrity of the story. It requires discipline but at all times we, and the crew, felt we were servants to the film and it's story rather than cutting and changing the film to comply with some opaque or nebulous market expectation.

We feel we have created a film for an international audience. We never saw ourselves as just an *Australian independent film*. That's not to take away from its roots or where the film came from, it's just we think the final film deserves appraisal against its rivals no matter where it comes from. We are immensely grateful to those who supported this rather, quixotic process over a decade in the making. Special mention must go to ScreenWest and MIFF who took the risk and backed us when others wouldn't. We hope to repay their faith in us.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

SAMARA WEAVING (*Mystery Road, Out of the Blue, Home and Away*)

Best known for her roles as Indi Walker in *Home and Away* and Kirsten Mulroney in the Australian-produced BBC TV series *Out of the Blue*, Samara made her feature film debut in *Mystery Road* (2013) alongside her uncle, Hugo Weaving.

Bad Girl marks her first role as a lead in a full length feature film.

SARA WEST (*Anzac Girls*)

Whilst Sara has worked with some of Australia's leading theatre and television companies, *Bad Girl* also marks her first role as a lead in a full length feature film.

Stage credits include Belvoir Theatres London tour of *The Wild Duck*, Malthouse Theatre/Griffin Theatre Company's *Ugly Mugs*, Sydney Theatre Company's *Travelling North*, Griffin Theatre Company's *Dreams in White* and Belvoir Theatres *Babyteeth*.

Film credits include *One Eyed Girl* and *The Daughter*.

Sara was the recipient of a Best Emerging Filmmaker Awards at the SASAs for her own short film *River Water* and is a published playwright as the winner of the 2014 AYTP Foundation Commission for her children's play – *The Trolleys*.

Sara is best known for her role on ABC's *Anzac Girls* as well as for her role as Liza Minnelli in Shine Australia's TV Biopic two-part miniseries – *Peter Allen, Not The Boy Next Door* (which premiered on Network September 2015). Other television credits include Network 7's *Winter*.

FELICITY PRICE (*Wish You Were Here, The Gift, Outside In*)

Felicity is an acclaimed Australian actor with a strong presence across theatre, film and television as well as a noted writer for both stage and screen.

A graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts (1996), her film credits include *Wish You Were Here* (2012) and *The Gift* (2015) – both alongside Joel Edgerton.

Theatre credits include *Don's Party* for the Sydney and Melbourne Theatre Companies, *Romeo and Juliet* (as Juliet) for the Melbourne Theatre Company and *Fat Pig* for the Sydney Theatre Company.

Co-writing credits include *Wish You Were Here* (2012), a collaboration with husband Keiran Darcy-Smith.

BEN WINSPEAR (*The Babadook*)

Ben has acted across stage, small screen and big screen with feature film credits including *Panic at Rock Island* (2011), *Geography of the Hapless Heart* (2014) and *The Babadook* (2014).

A graduate of NIDA, Ben was nominated for an AFI for his role in the ABC's *My Place* and also appeared in episodes of *Crownies*, *The House of Hancock* and *Underbelly*.

Ben has also acted for many of Australia's leading theatre companies and festivals including *Frankenstein* for Sydney Theatre Company, *Great Expectations* for Melbourne Theatre Company, *Baghdad Wedding* for Belvoir Street and *Faust* for Bell Shakespeare.

CREW BIOGRAPHIES

Writer/Director

FIN EDQUIST

Best known for his work on *Maya the Bee Movie* (writer) and *Blinky Bill The Movie* (writer), *Bad Girl* not only marks Edquist's directorial feature film debut but also his first time writing a full length feature.

Other writing credits include episodes of *Home and Away*, *House Husbands*, *Vic the Viking*, *Rescue Special Ops* and *McLeod's Daughters*.

For several years Fin worked as a director of commercials for The Guild of Commercial Filmmakers as well as producing and directing a number of award winning music videos and short films.

He was one of twelve directors invited to participate in the Frontières international film market at the Fantasia Film Festival (Montreal, 2012).

Fin is a graduate of the VCA School of Film & Television and studied postgraduate screenwriting at UCLA.

Producers

STEVE KEARNEY

With a background in live comedy, acting, producing, writing and music supervision spanning over 20 years, Kearney has toured the globe working in front and behind the lens.

In the 1990's, Kearney was one half of acclaimed comedy duo Los Trios Ringbarkus who toured the world to global acclaim securing development deals with Paramount Pictures, Columbia and United Artists. When the duo parted ways, Steve continued as a solo artist landing sit com development deals with Castle Rock, Warner Bros TV, Fox and NBC.

His intense knowledge of the US development system inspired him to bring that work ethic to Australia and, alongside fellow producer Leanne Tonkes, he formed Mini Studios in 2004 – a production and development company based in Melbourne eventually producing *My Mistress* starring Emmanuelle Beart .

Under his Kmunications Production house he also developed and produced the family hit *Oddball* released through Village Roadshow 2015

BRUNO CHARLESWORTH

Bruno Charlesworth's film career spans almost 30 years, beginning with John Hillcoat's debut feature film *Ghosts of the Civil Dead* in 1987. As a producer, he has produced or executive produced a substantial number of films including box office hits such as *The Craic* (1999) and festival darlings *Love and Other Catastrophes* (1996) and *Not Quite Hollywood: The Wild, Untold Story of Ozploitation* (2008). In 2012 Bruno produced the critically acclaimed Irish film *Good Vibrations*. He is also most recently the executive producer of Australian feature film *My Mistress* (2014) and *Beyond The Known World* (NZ/India 2016).

As an entertainment lawyer for over 2 decades , Bruno has represented creative talent in Australia and Internationally; working with directors and producers to aid all aspects of production, funding and distribution.

TENILLE KENNEDY

Bad Girl is the debut feature film for WA-based producer Tenille Kennedy.

Her credits include co-producing three chapters of *The Turning* (2013), the compendium feature film based on Tim Winton's best-selling novel, and as Associate Producer on ABC telemovie *An Accidental Soldier* (2013).

In 2013, Kennedy was selected by Screen Producers Australia for its highly coveted Ones to Watch program.

Together with business partner, Georgia Isles, Kennedy established George Nille and Co in 2014; a WA based production house with a number of exciting projects slated for the coming years .

COMPOSER

Warren Ellis

Warren is widely regarded as one of Australia's finest composers. Most recently winner of the 2015 Cesar (French Oscars) for his score in *Mustang*, Warren's music history is rich and varied. As frontman for the Dirty Three and playing and writing with Nick Cave over the last two decades in The Bad Seeds and Grinderman he is recognized as being one of our musical iconoclasts.

Warren's film scores with Nick Cave include *The Assassination of Jesse James*, *The Proposition* and just released *Hell and Highwater*.

While *Mustang* represented his first solo score *Bad Girl* is his second and offered him a blank canvas to pursue some hard edged soundscapes that are both richly emotional and aurally dystopic.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Gavin Head

Gavin began his career in the Camera Department in the mid 1990s. His passion for the craft of visual story telling presented him many opportunities to assist on feature films including *The Moon and the Sun* (2014), *Paper Planes* (2014), *Kill Me Three Times* (2014) and *Satellite Boy* (2012).

Gavin has also worked on numerous television mini-series including *Cloudstreet* (2008) *Howzat - Kerry Packer's War* (2011); as well as many commercial productions.

Recently Gavin has stepped away from his role as 1st Assistant Camera to explore the challenges of cinematography. He has contributed imagery to the feature documentary *Gurruumul: Elcho Dreaming* (2016) and Additional Cinematography for *Looking for Grace* (2015).

Gavin was cinematographer for the NITV commissioned short documentaries *Wurray* (2015) and *Wardbukkarra* (2015) as well as the feature drama *Bad Girl* (2016). Gavin is based in Perth, Western Australia.

EDITOR

Simon Njoo

Simon began his film editing career in France in 1995 where he spent 12 years learning his craft as an assistant to some of the country's most distinguished editors, working on independent films d'auteur, studio films, documentaries & feature trailers.

During his time there, Simon collaborated on films such as Pierre Salvadori's *Après Vous & ...Comme Elle Respire* (White Lies), Michel Blanc's *Mauvaise Passe* (The Escort) & John Malkovich's *The Dancer Upstairs*.

Credited titles include Jennifer Kent's widely acclaimed *The Babadook* (AACTA awards Best Film, 2015, Best Editing Film Critic's Circle of Australia 2015) & Stephen Page's highly regarded dance-fiction *Spear*, as well as Shane Danielson's short *The Guests* (Official Selection Short Film Competition, Cannes, 2015), Alex Holmes' *Ali & The Ball* (Winner Best Short Fiction Film, Sydney Film Festival 2008), Gideon Obarzanek & Edwina Throsby's *Dance Like Your Old Man* (Winner Best Documentary Short Film, Melbourne International Film Festival 2007) and Scott Otto Anderson's short film *Greg's First Day*.

Simon has also established himself as a sought after commercials editor.

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Emma Fletcher

Born in 1976 in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Emma lived on a farm called Zimbele until she was 19.

She is currently production designing the ABC TV series *Rosehaven* which is being filmed in Tasmania. Prior to this she production designed feature films *A Few Less Men*, *Bad Girl* and the dramatised documentary *Whiteley*. Emma also art directed the feature film *Blue Dog* and the Foxtel TV series *The Kettering Incident* which is slated for release in July 2016.

She is mad about colour, texture, image and pattern making and believes exposure to different cultures and spaces while travelling has enabled her to appreciate the relevance of place as well as provide a sensitivity to the importance of time and period within man's environment.

END CREDITS

PRE-PRESENTATION CREDITS

Curious Distribution
Daydream
Kmunication

PRESENTATION CREDITS

Screenwest and Lotterywest
In association with
Melbourne International Film Festival Premiere Fund
Present
A Kmunications, George Nille & Co and Immaculate Conception Film Production

STARRING

Sara West
Samara Weaving
Ben Winspear
Felicity Price
Rebecca Massey

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY

Fin Edquist

PRODUCERS

Steve Kearney

Bruno Charlesworth
Tenille Kennedy

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

James Dean
Michael Kantor

STORY BY

Fin Edquist
Steve Kearney

MUSIC BY

Warren Ellis

EDITOR

Simon Njoo

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Gavin John Head

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Emma Fletcher

CASTING DIRECTOR

Stevie Ray CGA

In memory of Wayne Davies and Linda Coates